

BEAUFORT



Union Occupation and Confederate Spies



Before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, local citizens formed the Beaufort Harbor Guards. These Confederate sympathizers, led by Capt. Josiah Pender, occupied Fort Macon when the sole guard, U.S. Army Ordnance Sgt. William Alexander, quietly surrendered.

During the siege of Fort Macon (Mar. 23–Apr. 25, 1862), Union signalmen on the porch of the Atlantic Hotel directed the Federal artillery in the dunes so that the shells fell accurately on the fort. Afterward, the hotel served U.S. forces as Hammond Hospital until the war ended, when it reopened as the Atlantic Hotel. The Sisters of Mercy, Roman Catholic nuns from New York, cared for the wounded and sick of Beaufort between July 1862 and May 1863.

Josiah Fisher Bell, whose house stands on the grounds of the Beaufort Historic Site, served as a Confederate secret agent and helped coordinate the movement of Southern troops into and out of the area. In April 1864, he planned and executed a mission to destroy the Cape Lookout lighthouses. His group succeeded in destroying one lighthouse and severely damaging the other.

The Old Burying Ground here contains the burial markers of both Confederate and Union soldiers as well as the graves of slaves and free blacks. Broad Street (to the north) became a major center for black refugees, and the area was known as Union City. During the Federal occupation of Beaufort, the deep-water port became an important coaling and repair station for the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

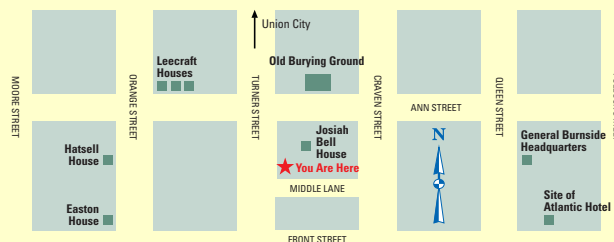


Josiah Fisher Bell



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, April 28, 1862, View of Fort Macon and Beaufort Harbor.

Below are a few points of interest. A more detailed walking tour brochure is available inside the Historic Site Welcome Center.



BEAUFORT, N. C.
BEAUFORT is an important place in North Carolina, periodically threatened by the rebels, who fret and fume over our possession of their sea coast. Our sketch gives a view of Beaufort, from Morehead city.
Beaufort was, in other days, a port of entry. It is the capital of Carteret county, and stands at the mouth of the Neuse river, a few miles from the sea. The harbor is considered the best in the State, and is defended by Fort Macon, so gallantly taken by our forces.